

Serial No. 10/615,973

AMENDMENT

Amendment to the Specification

Applicant respectfully requests that the following paragraph be substituted for paragraph 5 of the application.

[0005] More recently, U.S. Pat. Serial No. 10/443,617, "SURGICAL STAPLING INSTRUMENT INCORPORATING AN E-BEAM FIRING MECHANISM" to Shelton et al., filed on 20 May 2003, describes an improved "E-beam" firing bar for severing tissue and actuating staples. Some of the additional advantages include affirmatively spacing the jaws of the end effector, even if slightly too much or too little tissue is clamped for optimal staple formation. Moreover, the E-beam firing bar ~~includes~~ engages the end effector and staple cartridge in a way that enables several beneficial lockouts to be incorporated.